

**E N I L – European Network for Intergenerational Learning: Report on Intergenerational Learning and Volunteering**

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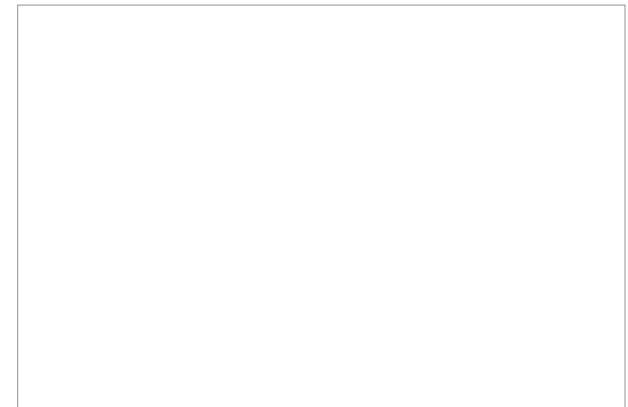
Cintia Colibaba, EuroEd Foundation, Iasi, Romania

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# ENIL

ENIL is an EU-funded project carried out by **25 institutions** from **22 EU countries** promoting **Intergenerational Learning**.

This Grundtvig network **brings together practitioners** and thus facilitates the exchange of expertise and effective practice by creating **support structures** aimed at influencing policy makers and policies through research, dissemination and advocacy.



# ENIL work plan

**Analyze** contexts and **present practices** within IGL in all project countries

**Understand** present needs of the main beneficiary groups with regard to IGL and the valorization of knowledge and experience, both on the part of the elderly and the younger generations

**Set up a platform** for fostering new ideas and new developments in IGL across Europe (overview on the state-of-the art in IGL at present, providing standardized terminology and facilitating understanding of concepts)

**Enable practitioners** throughout Europe to adopt / improve / promote and **policy makers** to offer further support and to mainstream IGL activities

# Network aims and objectives

**Promote IGL** by creating a pool of sustainable and effective practices in the field

**Research the field of IGL** and based on these findings, support further development of:

- understanding IGL and its importance if properly valorized
- development of lifelong learning skills with regard to intergenerational learning and volunteering
- valorization of the potential brought by volunteering activities within IGL

**Advocate for IGL** by promoting the mainstreaming of these practices at policy level

# Report on Intergenerational Learning and Volunteering

## *Objectives*

**research** the current acceptances of IGL as an approach and the understanding of the term IGL

**look into** current IGL practices connected to volunteering and of the issues of today's Europe that these practices address

**analyse the dynamics** of involvement in IGL and volunteering at national level in view of illustrating the contributions of public vs. private domains

**compare and contrast** implementation of IGL related to volunteering at national level

**analyze** the potential of further development of IGL with respect to volunteering

**make recommendations** for developments in the field

# Methodology 1 : data collection at European level

**case studies** collected **based on a common template** and a common understanding of the IGL concept:

**Organization implementing the project** (name, country, website, contact details)

**Problem** (define the problem, the context of the problem envisaged, the target groups)

**Action** (the activities carried out, summary of the solutions that were considered)

**Outcomes and impact** (impact on each category of key stakeholders)

**Testimonials** (from participants and organizers)

# Methodology 2 : data collection at European level

**Selective state of the art reports on IGL** at national level focusing on:

understanding and acceptances of IGL as a term and approach

IGL policies, funding, programmes

examples of public and private initiatives, emerging patterns

issues addressed through IGL

# Methodology 3 : data interpretation at European level

**acceptances** of the **term IGL** and **understanding** of an approach as being IGL  
(or not)

analysis of IGL **environments** and their potential

**research** on instances of **best practices** at European level, with involvement  
of volunteers

**synthesis** of the challenges met by IGL practitioners and solutions for / when  
involving volunteers

## IGL: understandings and background

**Formal education** is a **prescriptive system** designed to develop students' knowledge, understanding and skills. The **transfer of information** is one of the basic principles of formal education.

**Non-formal** education is **less prescriptive**, more flexible with regard to the objectives of the learning activities.

**Informal** learning is based on **valorisation of various situations** with educational potential. It is not comprised within the boundaries of curriculum although it can very well complete a formal or non-formal educational scheme.

**IGL** is a form of informal learning which, depending on the matrix used of its practice, can present some characteristics of formal learning. This means that IGL can happen both **non-formally** and **in-formally**.

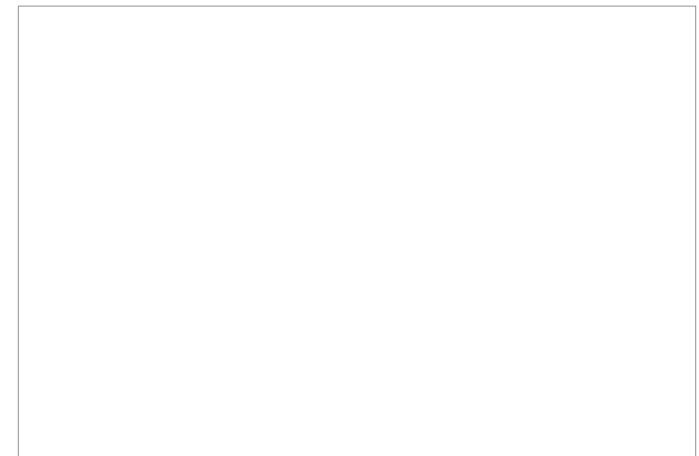
**IGL and FL:** the main difference between IGL and FL (family learning) is that IGL is not necessarily developed within the family. However, FL also does not necessarily involve reciprocity.

# IGL environment

IGL provides a **nonthreatening, reassuring** learning environment and creates learning opportunities and activities that are relevant to the learner.

According to research in the field of IGL, a wide range of skills are enhanced when they are developed in an intergenerational study (teaching learning) context. **Language, literacy and numeracy skills** can all be supported and extended by IGL models if they are facilitated effectively.

IGL is applicable in a multitude of contexts, lowering boundaries and **eliminating rigidity**. In this way, IGL brings forward the possibility of involving senior citizens, migrants, young people at risk, and tackling issues such as literacy, active citizenship, social exclusion, employability or early school leaving.



# IGL: working definition for data collection

Three essential characteristics of IGL

**involvement of more than 1 generation**

**activity planned prior to its implementation in a progressive manner**

**mutually beneficial learning**

IGL: working definition:

*IGL is a learning partnership based on reciprocity involving people of different ages where the generations work together to gain skills, values and knowledge.*

*Activities are labelled as IGL when they fulfil three criteria: involve more than one generation, planned in purpose and progressive, mutually beneficial learning which promotes greater understanding and respect between generations and, consequently, community cohesion.*

# IGL in Europe: state of the art

not an established concept

lacking governmental support for funding and at policy level in most of the EU countries

implemented to address specific issues

often understood as Family Learning

initiated by various organisations involved in adult education

# How is IGL done?

	Country	Volunteers	Family members	Other individuals	Schools	Other private organizations	Other public organizations	Literacy & reading	Drop-out, poor student performance	ICT	Social skills (responsibility, parenting,
	AU	x				x			x		
	BG	x			x	x				x	x
	Cyprus		x		x		x	x	x		x
	CZ	x	x			x	x	x			x
	DE	x		x	x		x	x			x
	DK	x		x	x		x	x			x
	ES	x			x		x		x		x
	FR	x		x	x		x	x			x
	IT	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x
	LT	x	x		x		x	x		x	x
	NO	x		x	x						x
	RO	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x
	SI			x	x	x		x			x
	UK	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x
	UK		x	x	x			x			x

# Today's Europe: challenges and solutions

- Austria
- Bulgaria
- Cyprus
- Denmark
- France
- Germany
- Italy
- Lithuania
- Norway
- Romania
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Czech Republic
- UK
- UK

## **Challenges of today's European community**

Digital divide between the young and the old, drop-out rates that are still worryingly high in some countries, literacy problems, risk of social exclusion for vulnerable groups such as senior citizens, migrants and young people at risk.

**IGL enables** the involvement of senior citizens, migrants, young people at risk, children with literacy problems.

By means of IGL, literacy (France and Italy), ICT (Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania, UK) but also social skills such as responsibility and active citizenship (Cyprus, Austria Germany, Romania, Slovenia), management and conflict resolution (Austria, Cyprus), parenting (Italy, the UK and Cyprus) can be acquired.

# Recommendations

Recommendations focusing on: transferability of initiatives, multiplication by public institutions, opening schools to volunteers and encouraging parental involvement

A practical approach to IGL with the added value of volunteering: create an inclusive model in relation to the roles of beneficiaries: Young people should be offered the opportunity to be “experts”, to increase their self-esteem and enable them to share, as well as receive knowledge and experience, so that they can move from being students to become facilitators and organizers.

Even if traditions in Europe at this moment focus more on the elderly as transfer point, gradual activities will illustrate the relevance and importance of young people’s input.

This however needs to be implemented in a gradual developmental way to allow national adaptation and flexibility on the part of both beneficiaries and policy makers.

# Perspectives on IGL

## *IGL and improvement of parental involvement*

opening the schools to IGL and volunteers increases family and parental involvement: where the family members are involved, students have higher grades and test scores, better school attendance, increased motivation, lower rates of suspension and drop-out.

Encouraging voluntary participation also ensures the access of older people to IGL initiatives, through NGOs or as family members directly.

## *Methodologies for delivery*

one-to-one / tandem initiatives have proven to be successful in several of the reporting countries (Bulgaria, Lithuania, Slovenia, The Czech Republic, Austria). On the other hand, the nation-wide initiatives also have their benefits and their visibility attract many volunteers and members of the target groups (12,000 volunteers in France throughout the country and in Italy 33% of the country's population participated in the "Born to Read" programme).